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MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO REDUCE HEALTH CARE WAIT TIMES FOR ONTARIANS

Wait Time Strategy Boosts Total New Medical Procedures to 1.2 Million

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is building on its successful wait time strategy by funding an additional 465,000 medical procedures for Ontarians this year, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

“When our government took office in 2003, Ontarians were facing long waits for key services and the government was unable to measure wait times,” said Smitherman. “That’s why we launched our Wait Times Strategy, which has delivered by adding over 1 million new medical procedures and giving Ontarians the ability to monitor wait times in their local hospital.”

The government is investing \$281.8 million in 2007/08, which includes:

- \$94.3 million for 12,429 more total hip and knee joint replacements;
- \$23.7 million for 33,225 more cataract surgeries;
- \$80.8 million for 117,664 more cardiac procedures;
- \$39.1 million for 6,199 more cancer surgeries;
- \$38.8 million for 223,773 more MRI exams; and
- \$5.1 million for 71,859 more CT exams.

In addition to these key services, the government will also be working to reduce wait times for pediatric surgeries this year.

“Our plan is working,” said Michael Chan, MPP for Markham. “We are providing patients with better access to the care they need and delivering faster results for a healthier Ontario.”

“These significant investments will sustain the wait time reductions which have been achieved by the efforts of thousands of nurses, Anesthetists, Surgeons and managers,” said Dr. Alan Hudson, Lead of Ontario’s Wait Time Strategy.

Since the launch of Ontario’s Wait Time Strategy in November 2004, the government has invested more than \$895 million for approximately 1,270,000 additional procedures, reducing wait times in:

- cataract surgery by 41 per cent;
- hip and knee replacements by 27 per cent and 30 per cent respectively;
- cancer surgery by 16 per cent;
- angiography by 50 per cent;
- angioplasty by 39 per cent;
- bypass surgery wait times by two per cent and

- MRI and CT scans by 13 and 24 per cent respectively.

By visiting www.ontariowaittimes.com website, Ontarians can see how long patients are waiting for treatment in the five key services that are part of the government's Wait Time Strategy. Updated and accurate information is posted on the website every two months to give patients and doctors the information they need to make decisions about the health care they receive and give.

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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